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A Suggestion Concerning *Smilax herbacea*, L.

The ablest botanists have hitherto failed to deal conclusively with our common herbaceous *Smilax* (carrion flower). Wood accepts three species, *S. herbacea*, L., *S. peduncularis*, Muhl., and *S. lasioneuron*, Hook. Gray includes these all under *S. herbacea*, making Muhlenberg's plant barely a variety, and Hooker's a mere form. Chapman agrees with Wood in accepting Muhlenberg's species as a good one. Alphonse De Candolle distributes the Linnæan species, as found in North America, into five varieties including the type, two of them equivalent to *S. peduncularis* and *S. lasioneuron*.

Ignoring such fluctuating characters as shape of leaf, degree of pubescence and length of peduncle, I find the following four apparent varieties :

a. Peduncles about three, in the axils of bracts below the leaves, which are all in a cluster above, at the summit of the low stem. (Specimens in the Columbia College herbarium.)

b. Peduncles about six, in the axils of the lowermost leaves; stem tall, leafy and branching above. (Plant collected on New York Island.)

c. Peduncles about six, in leaf-axils nearly midway of the plant; leaves and branches above and below on the tall stem. (Plant from J. F. James, Oxford, O.)

d. Peduncles numerous, commonly produced from the same axils with the branches, scattered midway and upward on the tall and leafy stem. (Plant from W. A. Kellerman, Manhattan, Kans., and specimens in C. C. Herb.)

Var. *a.*, the simplest form, chiefly southern, the one specially described by Chapman, equals var. *ecirrhata*, A. DC. Var. *b.* is much more developed, but the position of the inflorescence is not altered. Var. *c.*, however, shows a decided change in this respect, the new position being exactly analogous to that of the fructification in *Osmunda Claytoniana*. In var. *d.* the species reaches the acme of vigorous development, putting forth freely both reproductive and vegetative branches from the self-same axils.

The arrangement of the forms here proposed, although somewhat promising, is still merely tentative, and botanists will confer a special favor and help settle a sadly confused species, by informing

me whether the plants in their respective localities fall exactly under one or another of these suggested varieties, or are intermediate in character. The requisite observations are very simple and can be easily made, at least as to pistillate plants, at any time during the summer.

E. E. STERNS,
23 Union Square, N. Y.

On Some Inaccuracies in De Candolle's "Cultivated Plants."

In his "Origin of Cultivated Plants" (Second Edition, Paris, 1883), M. Alph. De Candolle says (page 177), that "the expedition of Alexander is probably the event that made the Peach known to Theophrastus, who speaks of it as a Persian fruit"; and a reference is given to Theophrastus, Hist., iv, c. iv. Now an attentive study of this fourth chapter of the fourth book of Theophrastus can find no mention of a Peach or of any fruit or tree that may be supposed by any stretch of construction to mean a Peach. Α μῆλον μηδικὸν ἢ περσικὸν there is, but the description attached to it clearly applies to the citron. This is recognized by M. De Candolle himself in his history of the Citron. "Theophrastus," he writes, "was the first to speak of it, and under the name of the Median or Persian apple in a phrase often repeated and commented on two centuries ago," and the reference to Theophrastus, book iv, chapter iv, is the identical passage given for the Peach.

Again, M. DeCandolle writes of the Bigarade (page 146), "it, as well as the sweet orange, was unknown to the Greeks and Romans"; while on page 148 he says: "If the sweet orange had been cultivated in very ancient times in India . . . it would certainly have been found, cultivated and propagated in the Roman Empire in preference to the Lemon, Citron and *Bigarade*." This last sentence is not only inconsistent with the former so far as regards the Bigarade, but it is inaccurate in the case of the Lemon. The inference that the Lemon was cultivated or known in the Roman world is nowhere supported by M. De Candolle with proof; whereas Gallesio, whose "profound researches" he largely quotes, says that he could find no trace of the fruit in Italy before it was taken there by the Crusaders.

K. B. CLAYPOLE.